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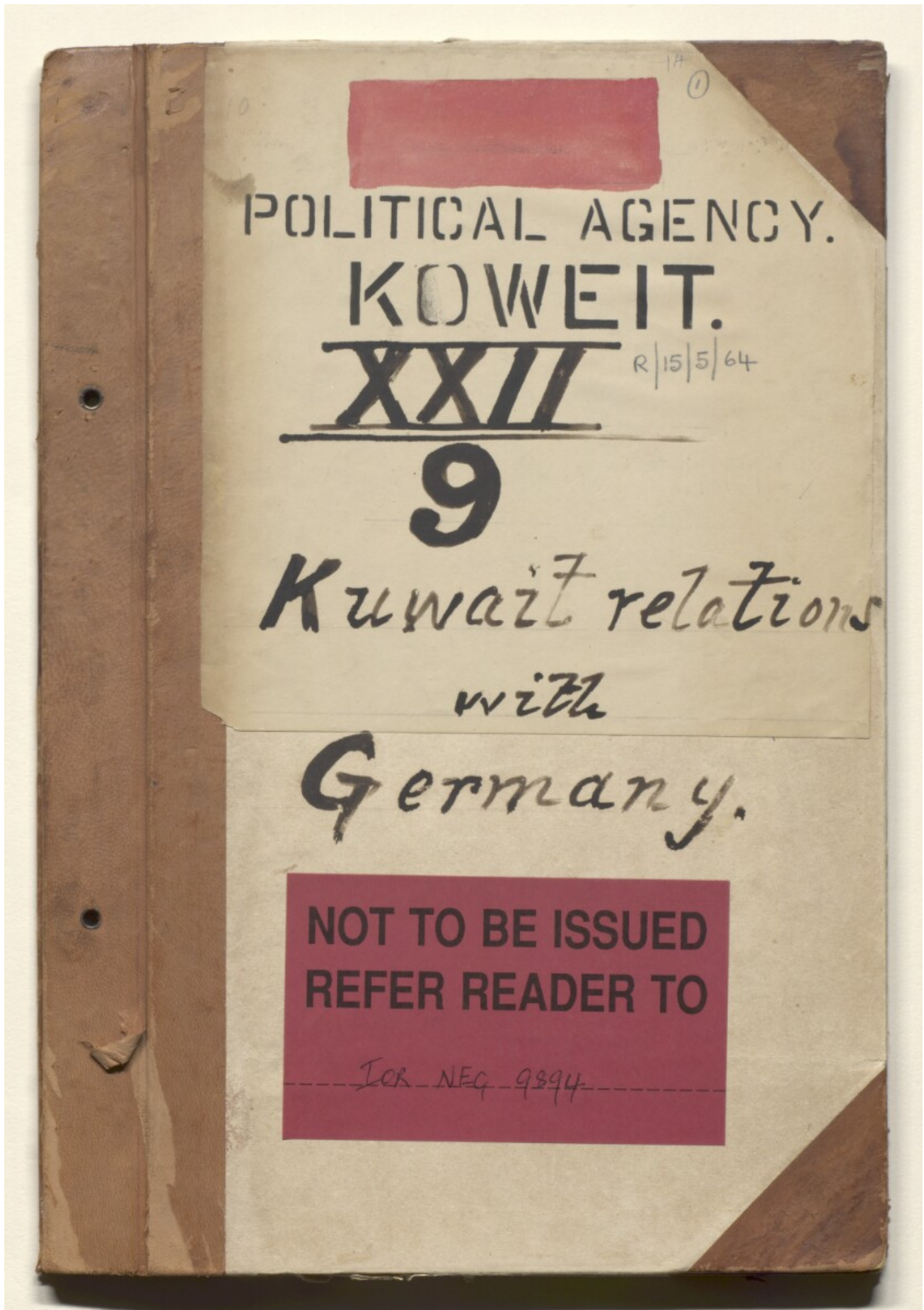
Reference	IOR/R/15/5/64
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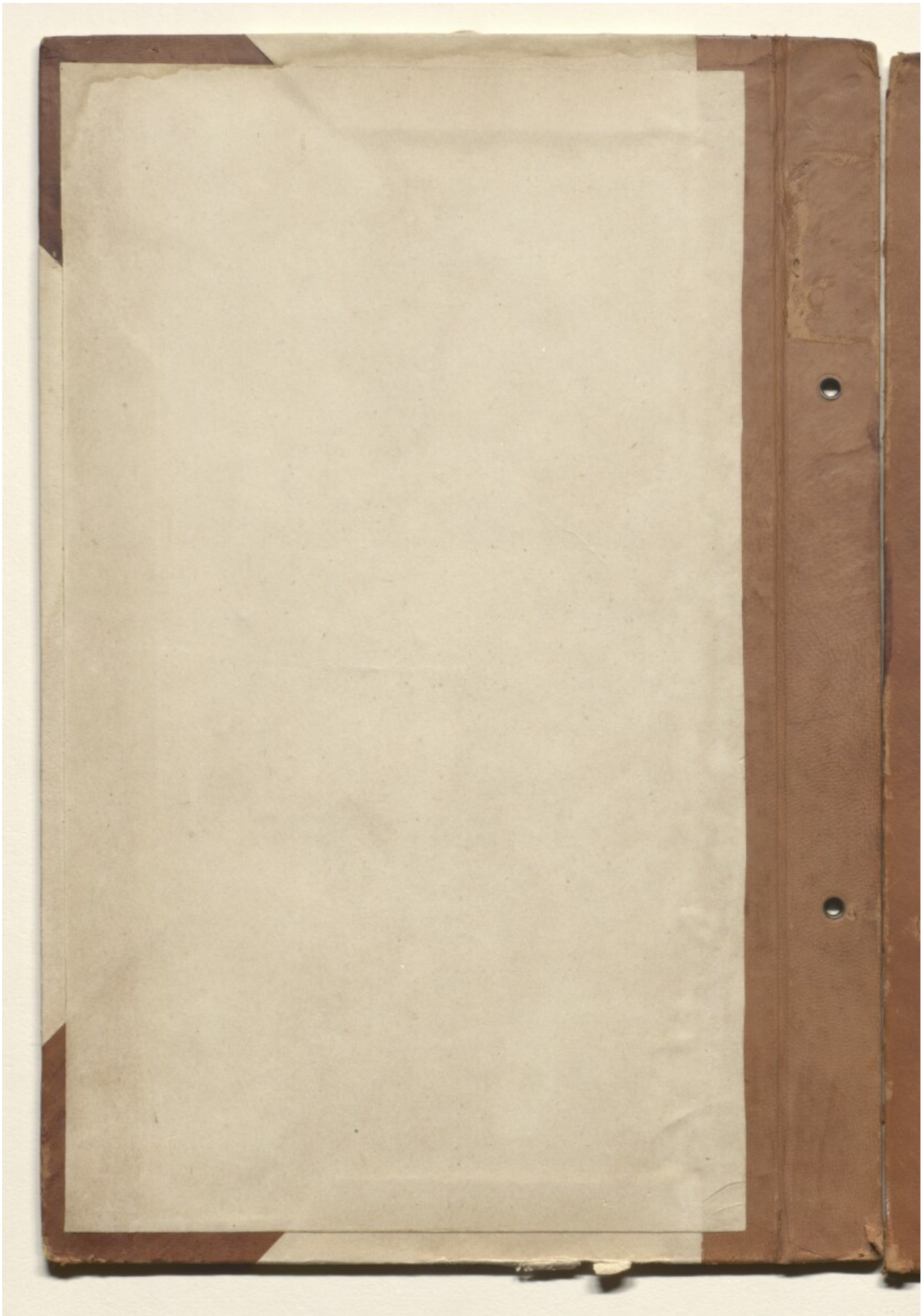
About this record

The volume comprises telegrams, despatches, correspondence, memoranda, and notes, relating to:

- the visit of Wonckhaus and an application for permission to open a branch in Kuwait;
- approaches from Wonckhaus about the Baghdad Railway.

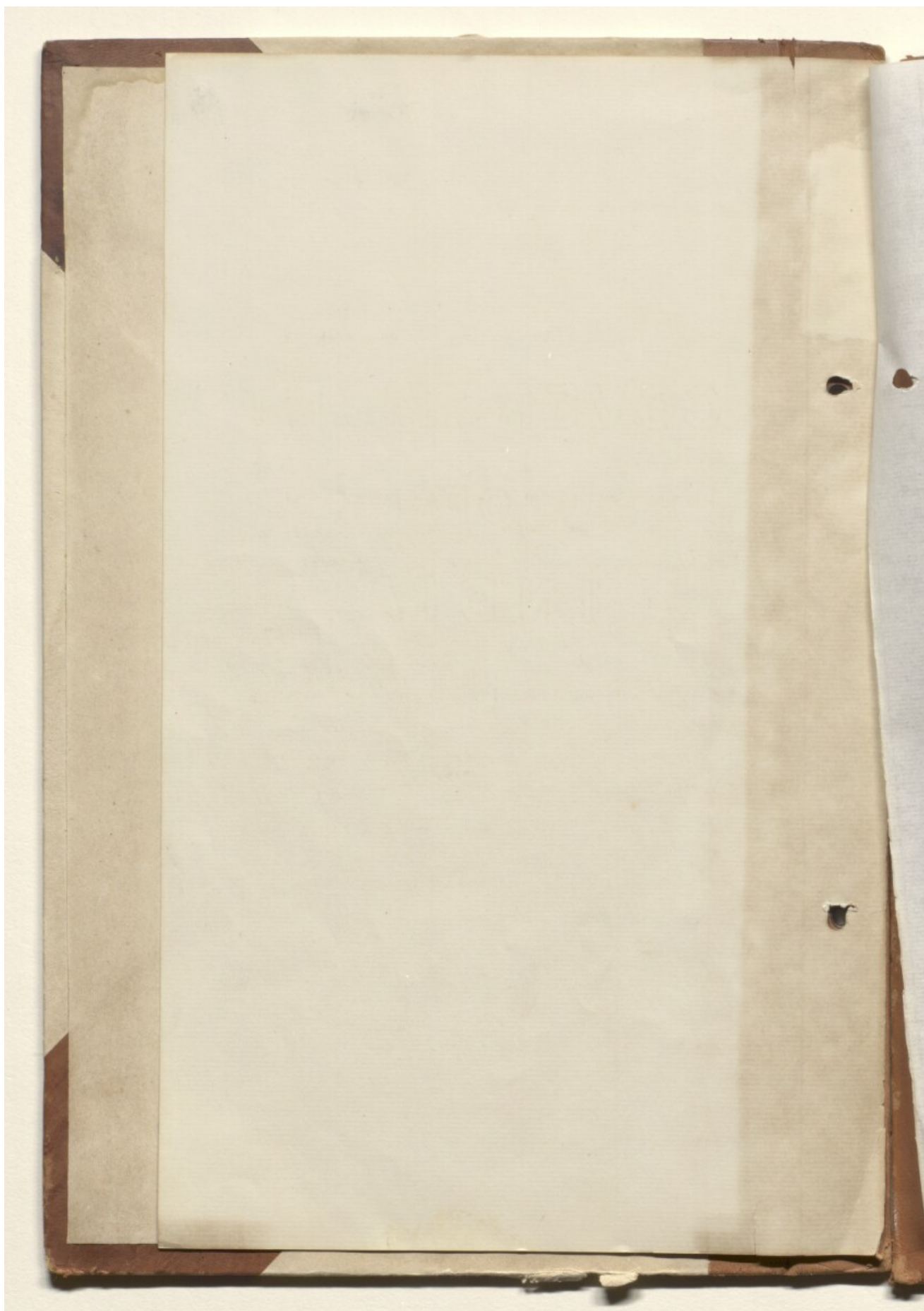
The principal correspondents in the volume include the following: Political Agent at Kuwait, William Henry Irvine Shakespear; the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Percy Zachariah Cox; and First Assistant Resident, R L Birdwood.







Sheikh's relations
with
Germany,
— —





*original in file
T III page 59 12/3*

COPY of a Confidential Letter No 479 dated the 3rd September 1907 from Major S.G. Knox, Political Agent, Kuwait to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, BUSHIRE.

Sir,

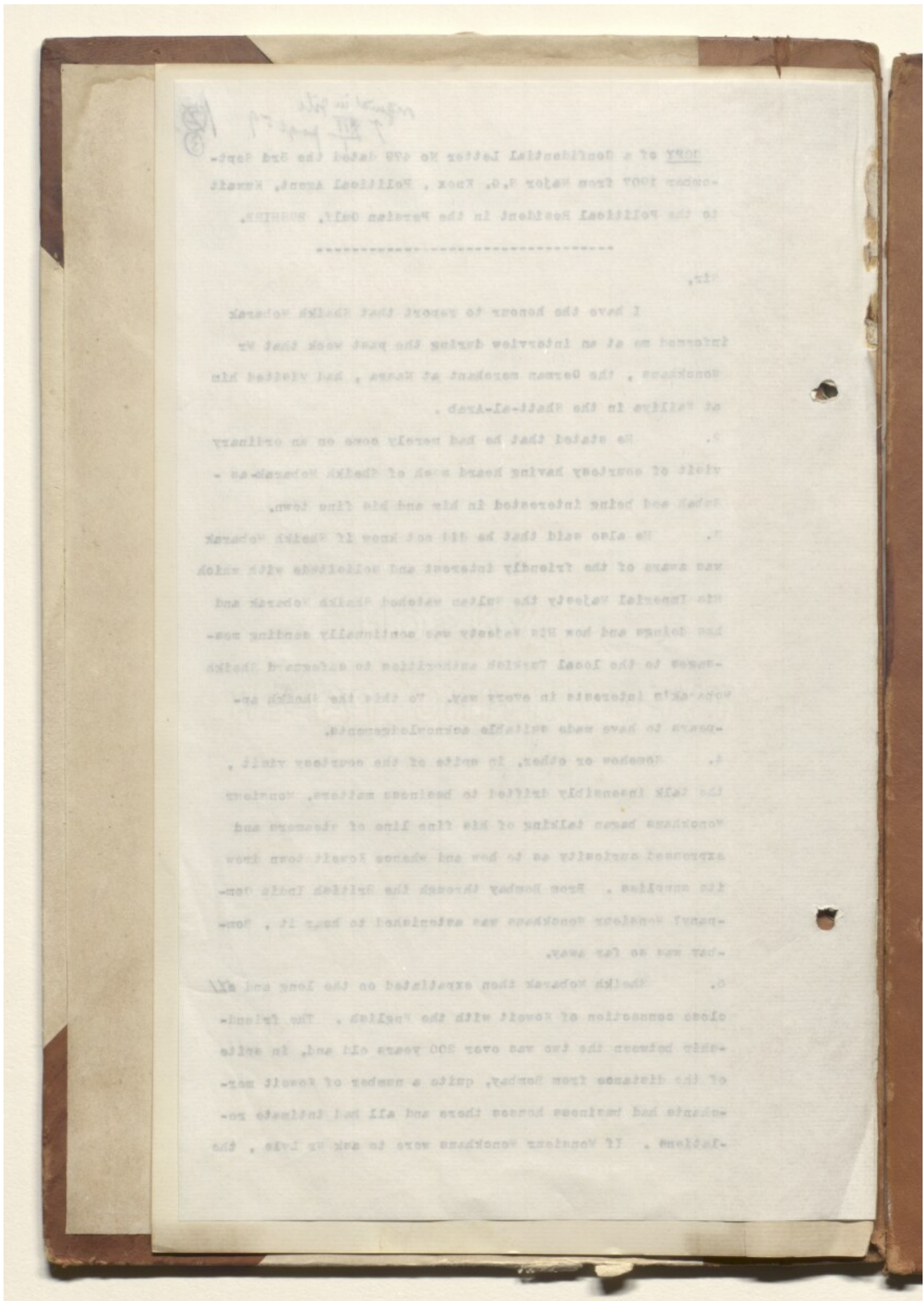
I have the honour to report that Shaikh Mobarak informed me at an interview during the past week that Mr Wonckhaus, the German merchant at Naqra, had visited him at Failiya in the Shatt-al-Arab.

2. He stated that he had merely come on an ordinary visit of courtesy having heard much of Sheikh Mobarak as a Subah and being interested in him and his fine town.

3. He also said that he did not know if Sheikh Mobarak was aware of the friendly interest and solicitude with which His Imperial Majesty the Sultan watched Shaikh Mobarak and his doings and how His Majesty was continually sending messages to the local Turkish authorities to safeguard Sheikh Mobarak's interests in every way. To this the Sheikh appears to have made suitable acknowledgements.

4. Somehow or other, in spite of the courtesy visit, the talk insensibly drifted to business matters, Monsieur Wonckhaus began talking of his fine line of steamers and expressed curiosity as to how and whence Kuwait town drew its supplies. From Bombay through the British India Company? Monsieur Wonckhaus was astonished to hear it, Bombay was so far away.

5. Sheikh Mobarak then expatiated on the long and close connection of Kuwait with the English. The friendship between the two was over 200 years old and, in spite of the distance from Bombay, quite a number of Kuwait merchants had business houses there and all had intimate relations. If Monsieur Wonckhaus were to ask Mr Lyle, the





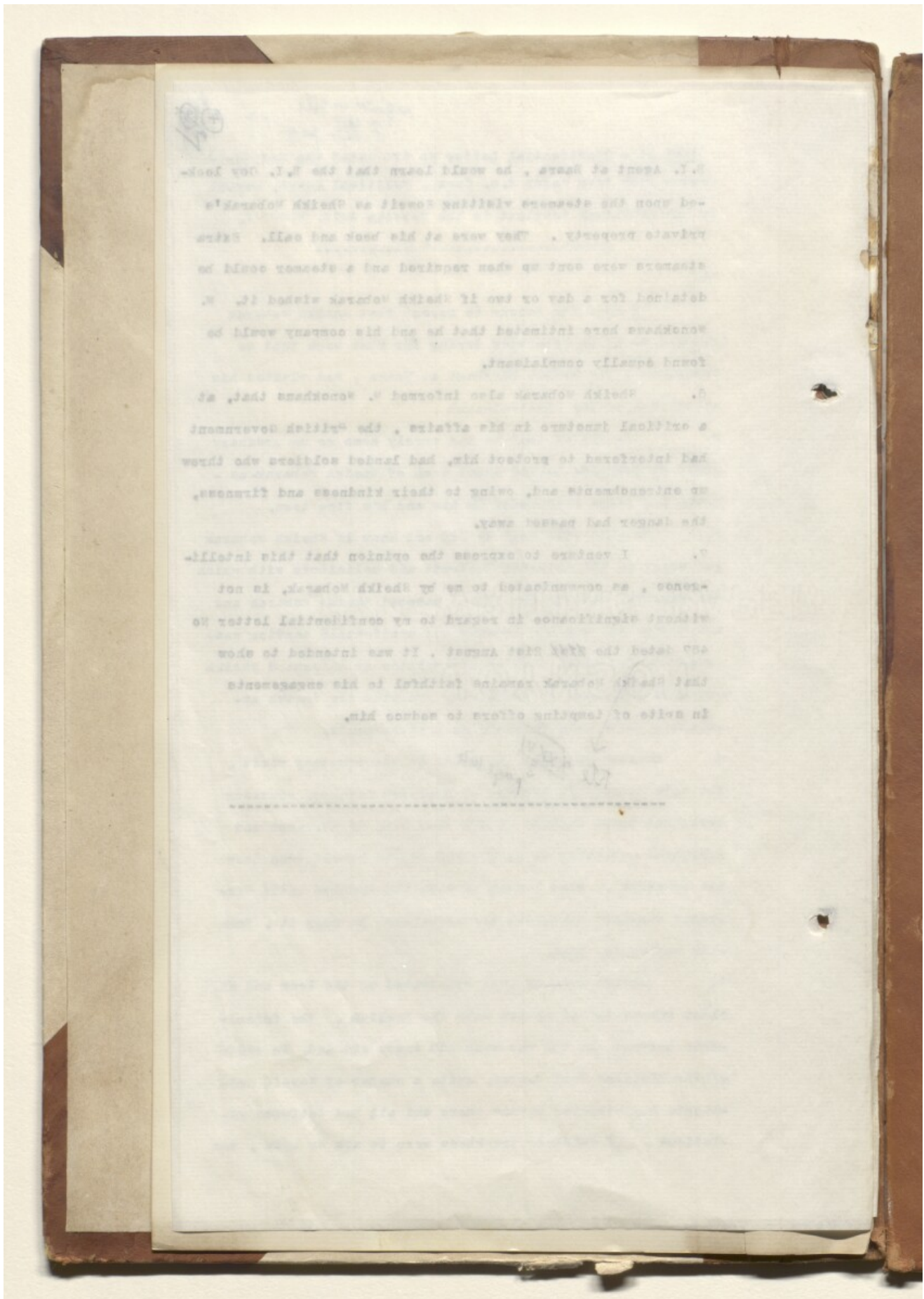
(4) 2/

B.I. Agent at Basra . he would learn that the B.I. Coy look-
-ed upon the steamers visiting Koweit as Sheikh Mobarak's
private property . They were at his beck and call. Extra
steamers were sent up when required and a steamer could be
detained for a day or two if Sheikh Mobarak wished it. M.
Wenckhaus here intimated that he and his company would be
found equally complaisant.

6. Sheikh Mobarak also informed M. Wenckhaus that, at
a critical juncture in his affairs , the British Government
had interfered to protect him, had landed soldiers who threw
up entrenchments and, owing to their kindness and firmness,
the danger had passed away.

7. I venture to express the opinion that this intelli-
-gence , as communicated to me by Sheikh Mobarak, is not
without significance in regard to my confidential letter No
457 dated the ~~21st~~ 21st August . It was intended to show
that Shaikh Mobarak remains faithful to his engagements
in spite of tempting offers to seduce him.

File XXXVI
3 page 104





JUL 18 1911

Substituted
for original
draft.

W. H. I.

No. C-22 (Confidential), dated Kuwait, the 19th April 1911.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, I.A., Political Agent, Kuwait,
To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

I have the honour to report that, when he came to see me this morning, Shaikh Mubarak informed me that about 10 days ago he had received a letter from the German Consul in Basrah accompanying another from Messrs. Robert Wönckhaus and Co. praying for permission to open a branch of their business in Kuwait.

2. The letters were brought by a man of the name of Abdulla bin Ustad Ahmed, who said he was Messrs. Wönckhaus' agent and purchased skins and furs for the firm. He was not a Kuwait man and is not known here.

3. The Shaikh brought his Secretary with him and had the letters read over to me. That from the German Consul merely recommended Messrs. Robert Wönckhaus and Co. as merchants who traded at other ports in the Gulf and wished to open an agency in Kuwait, to which they would appoint a Kuwait man who would trade in the same articles as the firm dealt with elsewhere. The Consul hoped that the Shaikh would accord the requisite permission and that in case of necessity he would find the firm useful to him. The Consul's letter was dated the 3rd Azar 1911 (Turkish Calendar) and the address and superscription were given as "Shaikh Mubarak Pasha bin Subah", the Turkish title of Qaimmaqam not being employed. The Arabic letter was written in parallel columns with a German translation and I regret I was unable to decipher the signature. Messrs Wönckhaus' letter was to much the same effect.

4. The Shaikh enquired from me what answer he should return for he must send some reply to the representative of a Foreign Government, and though he could deal easily enough with Arabs and Turks, he preferred to have British advice in this case. I replied that without reference I was not prepared to frame an answer for him but no doubt he knew as well as myself that all German trade in the Persian Gulf at present was carried on for political ends, and that this particular firm traded in a manner which left little doubt that their losses must be guaranteed by the German Government. In the circumstances it appeared to me as an obvious effort to open the way to German trade and influence and he probably knew that though the opening of such a door was easy it frequently led to future difficulties and he might find the subsequent closing of it difficult. No doubt he would be able to return a polite answer without my assistance, while I addressed the Political Resident on the subject.



4
→ page 1
2
5. In this connection I would invite a reference to my predecessor's letter No. 479, dated the 3rd September 1907, and beg that early instructions may be sent to me.

Sub-enclosure 1.

Translation.

No. 93, dated Basrah, the 23rd Adhai 911 (received 23rd March) 1911.

From—EMIL ACKLONI, Imperial German Consul,

To—His Excellency Shaikh Mubarak Pasha as Subah at Kuwait.

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the firm of Messrs. Robert Wönckhaus and Co. desire to open a branch of business in your flourishing town and that it will have for the present to be under the agency of one of the natives of that place. The object of (doing) this is to transact business on general lines similar to the business which they carry on in the Gulf, and I shall be extremely grateful to you to permit the opening of this Agency and meanwhile to assist the firm in case of exigency and need.

I trust that you will deign to accept this my request and I beg to offer you my high regards in advance.

Sub-enclosure 2.

Translation.

Dated Basrah, the 23rd Adhai 911 (received 23rd March) 1911.

From—THOMAS BROWN, Esq., p. p. Robert Wönckhaus & Co.,

To—His Excellency Shaikh Mubarak Pasha as Subah at Kuwait.

After offering due respects we have the honour to represent to Your Excellency that relying on a letter (of recommendation) from the German Consul we have to inform Your Excellency that we have appointed, as our Agent in business, Abdullah bin Ustad Ahmed, who is also empowered to appoint an Agent to assist him and who is likewise authorised to enter into all sorts of commercial transactions. We hope that you will co-operate with our Agent in this object and that you will pay him your attention with a view to assisting him in the requirements of business and show him courtesy and kindness, it being our highest wish and desire to obtain your protection, so that we may, by that means, gain the satisfaction of the public and their favour because the basis of our object is the extension of commerce as has been done by us in all places.

We are thankful to you, in advance, for your courtesy and kindness and are ready to render such services as you may do us the honour to refer to us.



Confidential

No. 1176 of 1911.

British Residency and Consulate-General.

Bushire, 3rd May 1911.

W. W. S.
MAY 4 - 1911
C. 44

Copies forwarded, with compliments, to the Political Agent, Koweit, with reference to his letter No. C-22 of 19th April on the subject of Messrs Wonckhaus's application to appoint an Agent at Koweit.

By Order,

E. Noel.

Lieutenant, R.N.

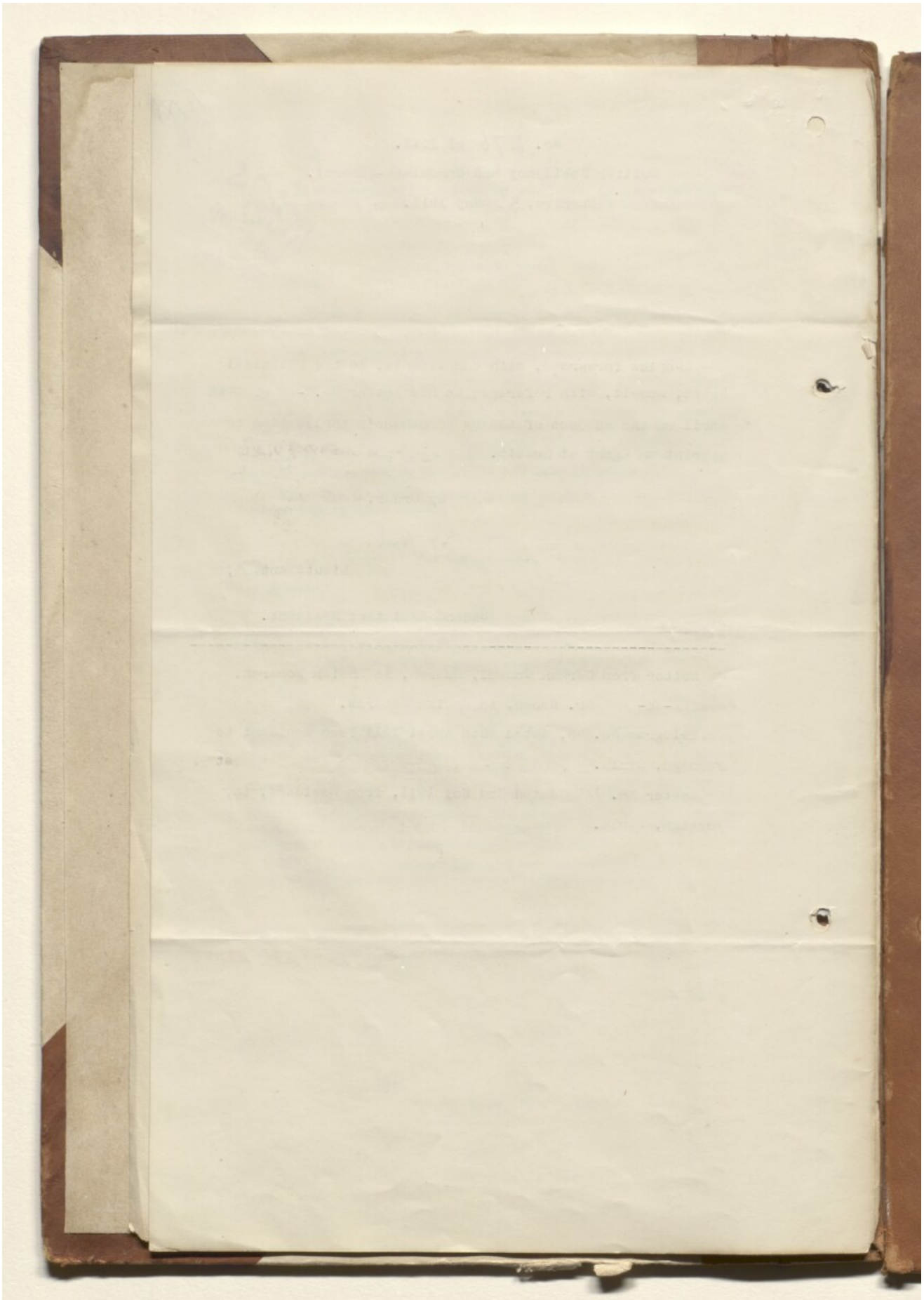
Second Assistant Resident.

Letter from German Consul, Busreh, to Sheikh Mobarak.

-do- Mr. Brown, to Sheikh Mobarak.

Telegram No. 395, dated 30th April 1911 from Resident to Foreign, Simla.

Letter No. 1175 dated 3rd May 1911, from Resident, to Foreign, Simla.





Translation.

68
7
Bussorah, the 23rd Adhai 111
(23rd March 1911).

No.93.

To

His Excellency

Sheikh Mobarak Basha es Subah

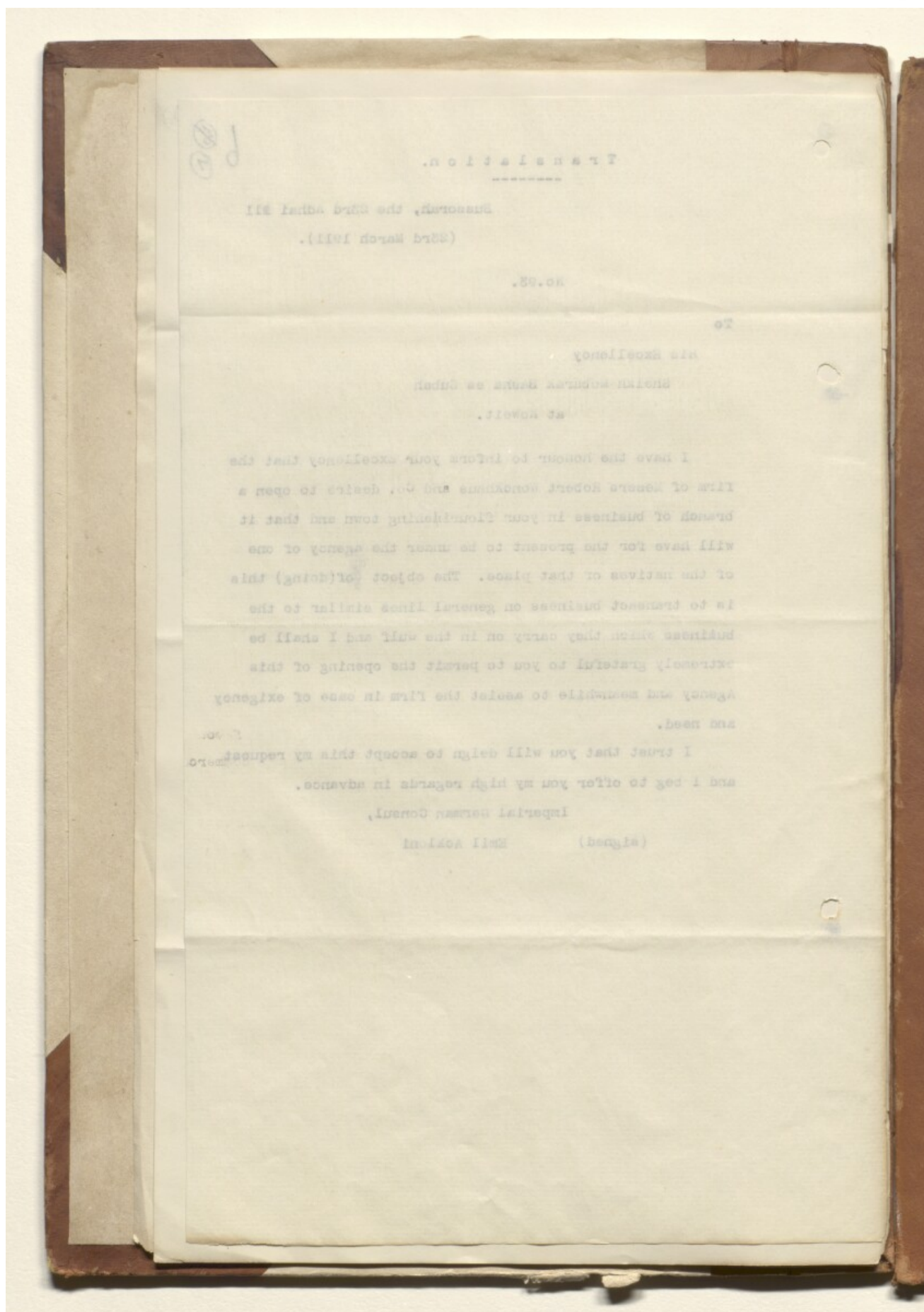
at Koweit.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the firm of Messrs Robert Wouckhaus and Co. desire to open a branch of business in your flourishing town and that it will have for the present to be under the agency of one of the natives of that place. The object of (doing) this is to transact business on general lines similar to the business which they carry on in the Gulf and I shall be extremely grateful to you to permit the opening of this Agency and meanwhile to assist the firm in case of exigency and need.

I trust that you will deign to accept this my request and I beg to offer you my high regards in advance.

Imperial German Consul,

(signed) Emil Ackleni





Translation.

78
Bussorah, the 23rd Adhai 911
(23rd March 1911).

To

His Excellency Sheikh Mobarak Basha es Subah
at Koweit.

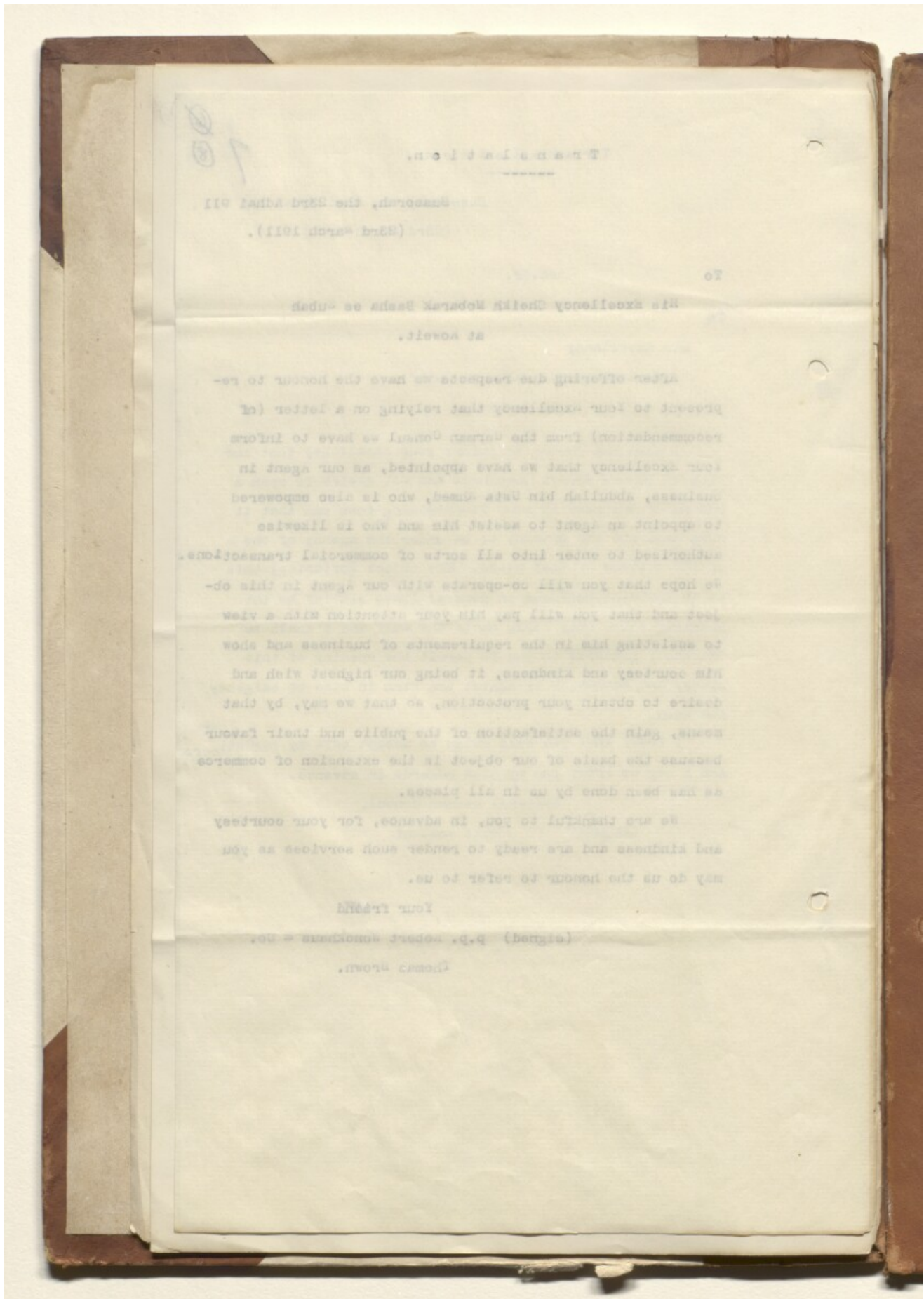
After offering due respects we have the honour to re-
present to Your Excellency that relying on a letter (of
recommendation) from the German Consul we have to inform
Your Excellency that we have appointed, as our Agent in
business, Abdullah bin Usta Ahmed, who is also empowered
to appoint an Agent to assist him and who is likewise
authorised to enter into all sorts of commercial transactions.
We hope that you will co-operate with our Agent in this ob-
ject and that you will pay him your attention with a view
to assisting him in the requirements of business and show
him courtesy and kindness, it being our highest wish and
desire to obtain your protection, so that we may, by that
means, gain the satisfaction of the public and their favour
because the basis of our object is the extension of commerce
as has been done by us in all places.

We are thankful to you, in advance, for your courtesy
and kindness and are ready to render such services as you
may do us the honour to refer to us.

Your friend

(signed) p.p. Robert Wenzkhaus & Co.

Thomas Brown.





Telegram. P.

From - Resident, Bushire.

To - Foreign, Simla.

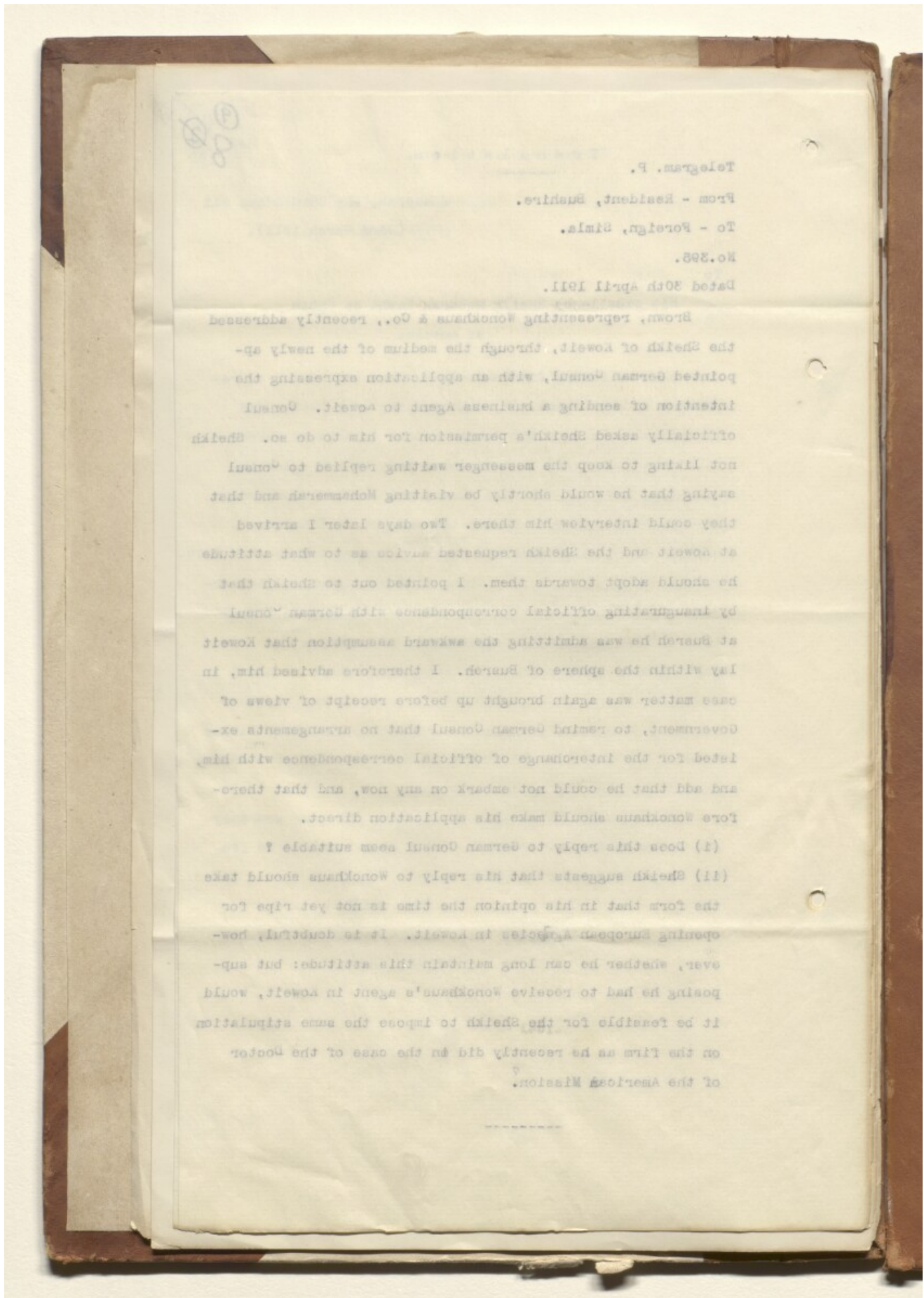
No.395.

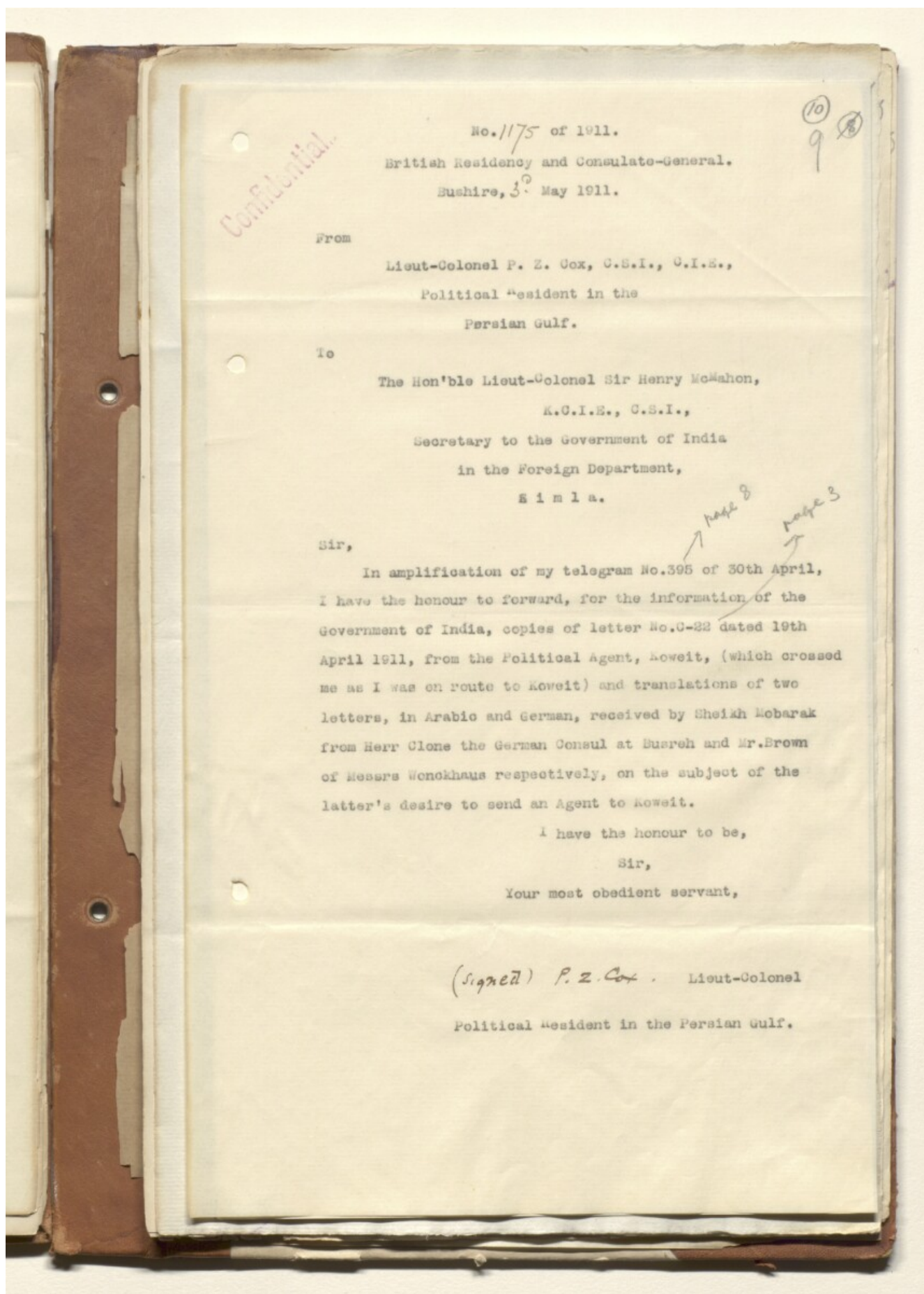
Dated 30th April 1911.

Brown, representing Wonckhaus & Co., recently addressed the Sheikh of Koweit, through the medium of the newly appointed German Consul, with an application expressing the intention of sending a business Agent to Koweit. Consul officially asked Sheikh's permission for him to do so. Sheikh not liking to keep the messenger waiting replied to Consul saying that he would shortly be visiting Mohammerah and that they could interview him there. Two days later I arrived at Koweit and the Sheikh requested advice as to what attitude he should adopt towards them. I pointed out to Sheikh that by inaugurating official correspondence with German Consul at Busreh he was admitting the awkward assumption that Koweit lay within the sphere of Busreh. I therefore advised him, in case matter was again brought up before receipt of views of Government, to remind German Consul that no arrangements existed for the interchange of official correspondence with him, and add that he could not embark on any now, and that therefore Wonckhaus should make his application direct.

(i) Does this reply to German Consul seem suitable ?

(ii) Sheikh suggests that his reply to Wonckhaus should take the form that in his opinion the time is not yet ripe for opening European Agencies in Koweit. It is doubtful, however, whether he can long maintain this attitude: but supposing he had to receive Wonckhaus's agent in Koweit, would it be feasible for the Sheikh to impose the same stipulation on the firm as he recently did in the case of the Doctor of the American Mission?





No. 1175 of 1911.

British Residency and Consulate-General.

Bushire, 3rd May 1911.

From

Lieut-Colonel P. Z. Cox, C.S.I., C.I.E.,

Political Resident in the

Persian Gulf.

To

The Hon'ble Lieut-Colonel Sir Henry McMahon,

K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,

Secretary to the Government of India

in the Foreign Department,

S i m l a.

Sir,

In amplification of my telegram No. 395 of 30th April, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, copies of letter No. C-22 dated 19th April 1911, from the Political Agent, Koweit, (which crossed me as I was en route to Koweit) and translations of two letters, in Arabic and German, received by Sheikh Mobarak from Herr Clone the German Consul at Busrah and Mr. Brown of Messrs Wernckhaus respectively, on the subject of the latter's desire to send an Agent to Koweit.

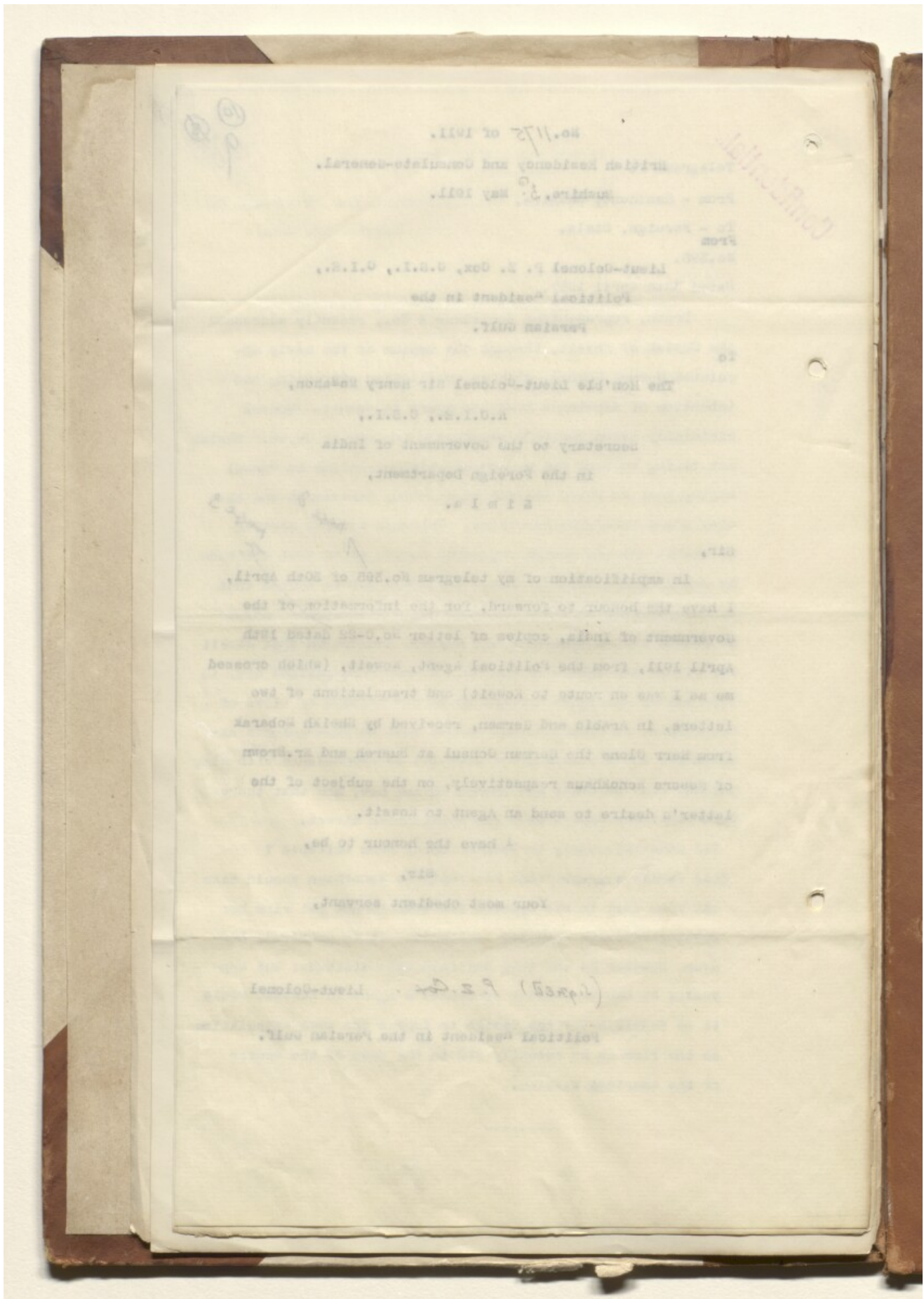
I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(signed) P. Z. Cox. Lieut-Colonel

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.





Telegram - P.

From - Foreign, Simla.

To - Resident, Bushire.

No.322-S.

Dated and received 22nd May 1911.

Advice given by you to Sheikh, as contained in your telegram No.395 of April 30th, is approved. If any further move is made by the German Consul, the Sheikh might go further than making it very plain the fact that he does not consider himself within the sphere of Busreh, by giving out that in matters requiring Consular intervention he regards himself as within the jurisdiction of the Consul at Bushire. Your stipulation as to Wonckhaus opening an agency at Koweit cannot be imposed but Sheikh's proposed reply to Wonckhaus is suitable as serving the purpose of keeping firms out of Koweit for the present.

CONFIDENTIAL

No./475 of 1911.

British Residency and Consulate-General.

Bushire, 6 June 1911.

Copy forwarded, with compliments, to the Political Agent, Koweit, for information and necessary action, with reference to the correspondence ending with this office endorsement No. 1176, dated the 3rd May 1911.

By Order,

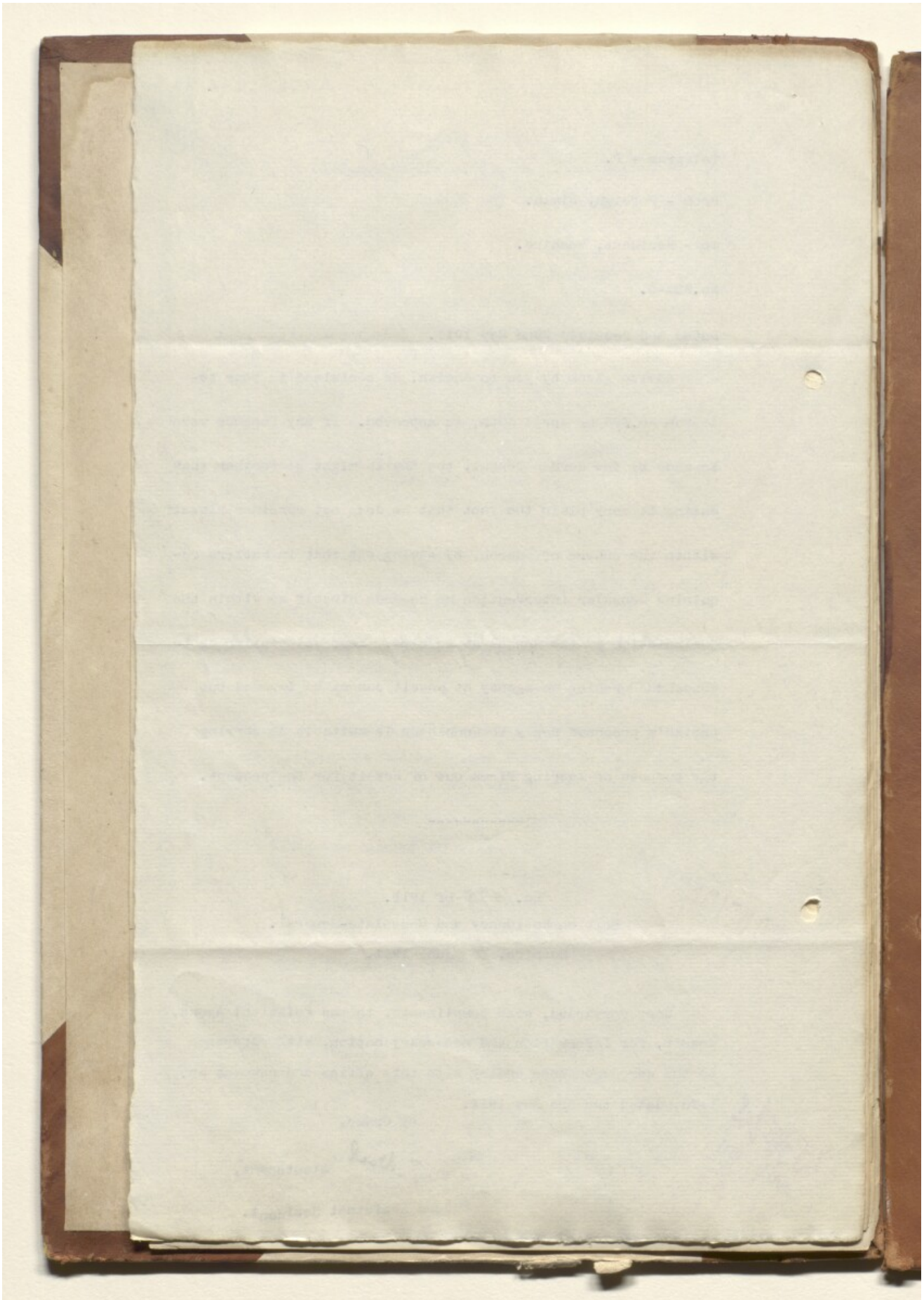
G. Noel

Lieutenant,

Second Assistant Resident.

157-28
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C-49

page 5





No. 1664 (Confidential), dated Bushire, 25th June (received 3rd) July 1911.

From—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—The HON'BLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR HENRY McMAHON, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla.

With reference to Foreign Department telegram No. S.-322, dated May 22nd, intimating the nature of the advice to be given to the Shaikh of Kuwait in regard to the attitude which he should adopt towards the German Firm and Consul at Basrah, I have the honour to submit, for the information of Government, a copy of the Political Agent's* letter reporting the action taken by him to give

* No. C-36, dated 14th June 1911.
effect to his instructions.

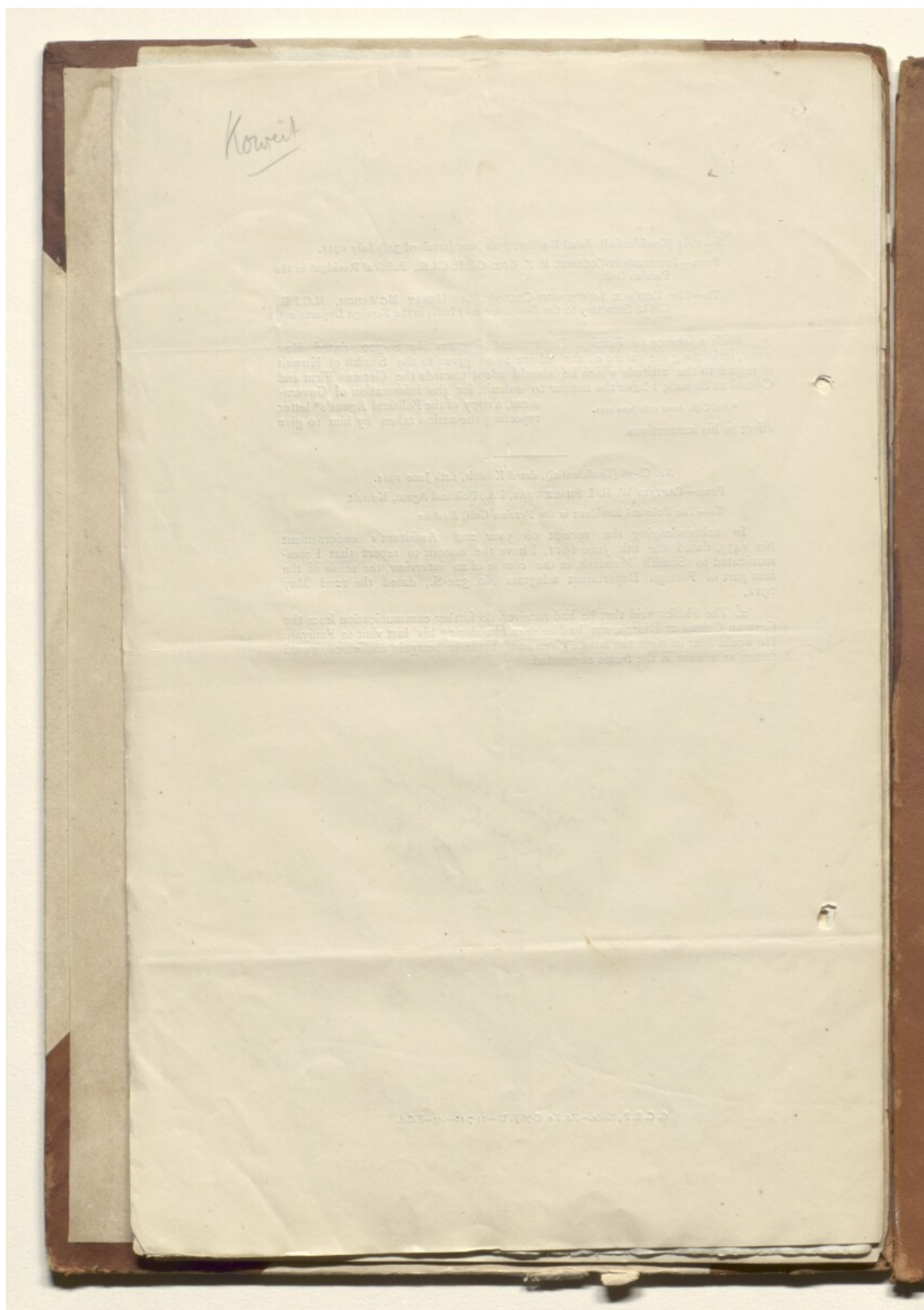
No. C-36 (Confidential), dated Kuwait, 14th June 1911.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, I.A., Political Agent, Kuwait,

To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

In acknowledging the receipt of your 2nd Assistant's endorsement No. 1475, dated the 6th June 1911, I have the honour to report that I communicated to Shaikh Mubarak, in the course of an interview, the sense of the first part of Foreign Department telegram No. 322-S., dated the 22nd May 1911.

2. The Shaikh said that he had received no further communication from the German Consul at Basrah, nor had he seen him during his last visit to Failiyah. He would bear in mind the advice given and, should he be again addressed, would return an answer in the terms suggested.





CONFIDENTIAL

note originals in file XXVII
over 3
page 21

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(13)

W.D. 28
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Demi-official dated Bushire Residency, the July 1911.

From—CAPTAIN R. L. BIRDWOOD, I.A., First Assistant Resident (in the absence of the Resident),

To—E. H. S. CLARKE, ESQ., C.I.E., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

With reference to this office letter No. 1664, dated 25th June, I enclose herewith copy of a demi-official letter dated June 21st, from Shakespear forwarding a memorandum regarding German commercial activity at Kuwait. I also forward extracts from the Kuwait Diary bearing on the same subject.

Demi-official dated the 21st June 1911.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, Political Agent, Kuwait,

To—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

You will have seen references in my diaries to the efforts of Wonckhaus's agents here. I enclose a Note in the same connection.

I doubt whether their purchases have reached the figure of T £ 11,000, but there is no doubt that they are buying, quite regardless of prices and possible profits, anything which comes along. The B. I. Agent tells me that he has been sending reports to Lyle in Basrah about them.

When the subject cropped up with the Shaikh, he said he knew of their efforts and could not see what possible profit they could make.

I don't know whether the German ship is really coming, but I only heard yesterday of it too late to ask the Shaikh.

I am keeping a lookout for more news about them, and hope to get hold of a few more facts than are at present available; at present everybody prefaces his remarks with "they say, etc."

NOTE.

In addition to the purchases of barley, which Ali Bash made and which we reported in our diaries, it is stated that he has also been buying and exporting large quantities of wool, hides, lamb-skins, etc., to Basrah by native boats probably for shipment from there by German ships. It is said that he has so far bought goods here to the value of about T £ 11,000.

Some 300 "tagars" of paddy (unhusked rice) and about 4,000 mats were, it appears, received by him from Basrah by country boats and sold here on the firm's account during the last 2 or 3 months.

It is said that they expect shortly to introduce German soft and loaf sugar, kerosine oil, and other goods in the Kuwait market.

Ali Bash is stated to be on very friendly terms with Abdul Mohsin, the Shaikh's Customs Master, and that the latter is using his influence in securing enterprising men and merchants to push the firm's interests. Much of the success that has attended to Ali Bash in his transactions within such a short space of time is said to be due entirely to the support and help which he has received from Abdul Mohsin.

The whole quantity of barley bought by him is still lying in the customs. Probably it is awaiting the arrival of the German ship which is rumoured to be due to arrive here in a week or two more.

Some 4,000 bags or baskets of dates, it appears, are already booked by Kuwait merchants for Aden to go by the above steamer.

Kuwait, dated 21st June 1911.



13

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Extract from Kuwait Agency Diary for week ending 25th May 1911.

FOREIGN INTERESTS.

203. Ali Bash, a Persian, who has been in Kuwait for about two months and is said to be acting on behalf of the German firm of Messrs. Robert Wonckhaus and Co., has started making large purchases of barley, and the price therefore has risen in Kuwait from \$40 to \$60 per "itkhar" (20 maunds). Abdul Mohsin, the Shaikh's Customs Master, and Mohamed bin Mutair, an Arab petty merchant, are said to be helping him in his transactions and acting as his brokers.

Extract from Kuwait Agency Diary for week ending 31st May 1911.

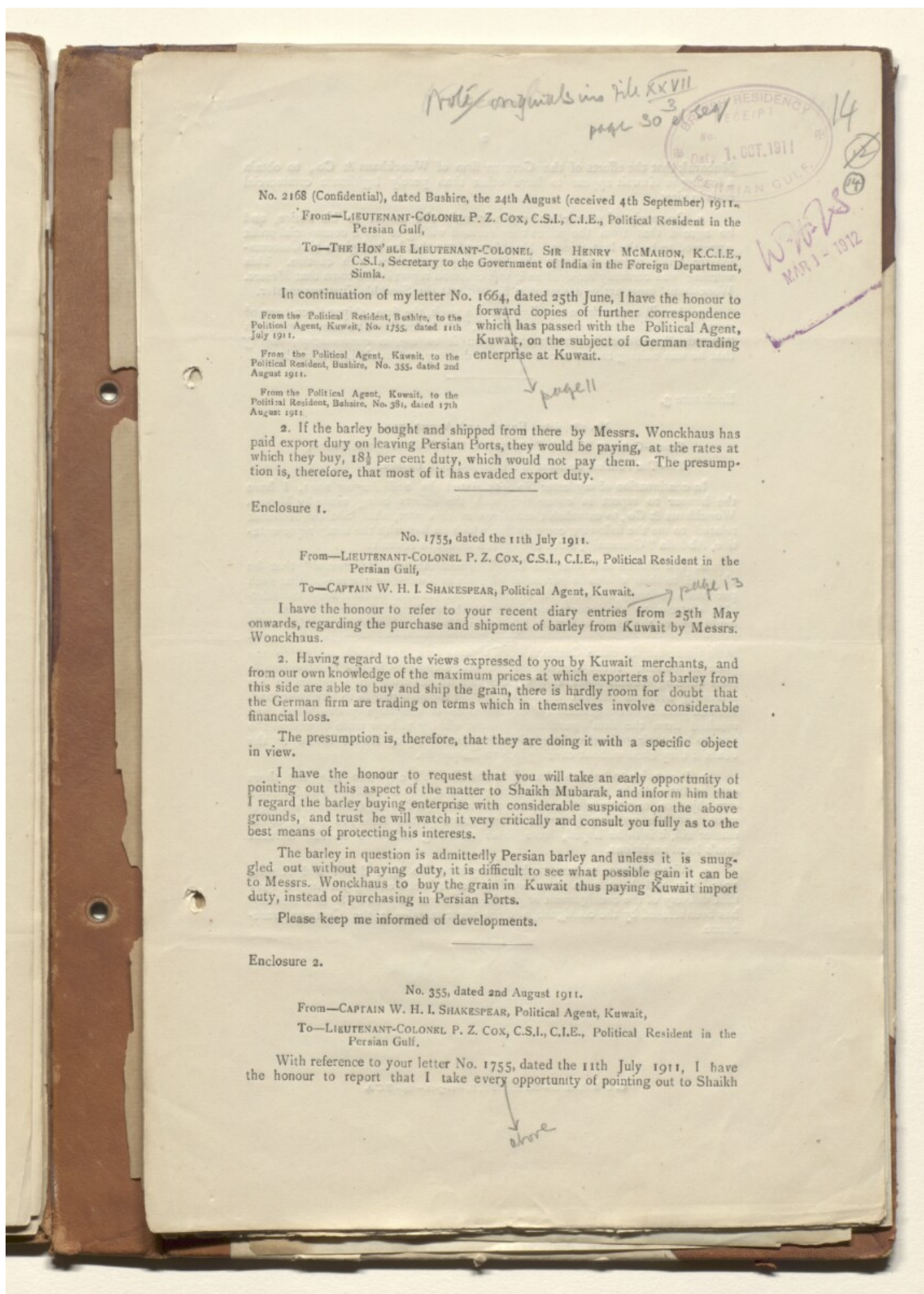
FOREIGN INTERESTS.

213. With reference to paragraph 203 of Kuwait news for week ending 25th May 1911, Abdullah "Germani," a Persian employé of Messrs. Robert Wonckhaus and Co., Bahrain, arrived by mail on the 26th from Basrah to see, it is stated, what purchases Ali Bash had made on behalf of the firm. The total quantity of barley bought is estimated to be over 200 "tagars" or some 3,000 cwt. Abdullah, it is believed, intends leaving for Bahrain by next down slow mail.

Extract from Kuwait Agency Diary for week ending 14th June 1911.

FOREIGN INTERESTS.

229. With reference to paragraph 213 of Kuwait news for week ending 31st May 1911, Abdullah "Germani" left for Bahrain by mail steamer "Waronga" on the 9th.



No. 2168 (Confidential), dated Bushire, the 24th August (received 4th September) 1911.
 From—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,
 To—THE HON'BLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR HENRY McMAHON, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla.

In continuation of my letter No. 1664, dated 25th June, I have the honour to forward copies of further correspondence which has passed with the Political Agent, Kuwait, on the subject of German trading enterprise at Kuwait.

From the Political Resident, Bushire, to the Political Agent, Kuwait, No. 1755, dated 11th July 1911.

From the Political Agent, Kuwait, to the Political Resident, Bushire, No. 355, dated 2nd August 1911.

From the Political Agent, Kuwait, to the Political Resident, Bushire, No. 381, dated 17th August 1911.

2. If the barley bought and shipped from there by Messrs. Wonckhaus has paid export duty on leaving Persian Ports, they would be paying, at the rates at which they buy, 18½ per cent duty, which would not pay them. The presumption is, therefore, that most of it has evaded export duty.

Enclosure 1.

No. 1755, dated the 11th July 1911.

From—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, Political Agent, Kuwait.

I have the honour to refer to your recent diary entries from 25th May onwards, regarding the purchase and shipment of barley from Kuwait by Messrs. Wonckhaus.

2. Having regard to the views expressed to you by Kuwait merchants, and from our own knowledge of the maximum prices at which exporters of barley from this side are able to buy and ship the grain, there is hardly room for doubt that the German firm are trading on terms which in themselves involve considerable financial loss.

The presumption is, therefore, that they are doing it with a specific object in view.

I have the honour to request that you will take an early opportunity of pointing out this aspect of the matter to Shaikh Mubarak, and inform him that I regard the barley buying enterprise with considerable suspicion on the above grounds, and trust he will watch it very critically and consult you fully as to the best means of protecting his interests.

The barley in question is admittedly Persian barley and unless it is smuggled out without paying duty, it is difficult to see what possible gain it can be to Messrs. Wonckhaus to buy the grain in Kuwait thus paying Kuwait import duty, instead of purchasing in Persian Ports.

Please keep me informed of developments.

Enclosure 2.

No. 355, dated 2nd August 1911.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, Political Agent, Kuwait,

To—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

With reference to your letter No. 1755, dated the 11th July 1911, I have the honour to report that I take every opportunity of pointing out to Shaikh



15

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Mubarak that the efforts of the German firm of Wonckhaus & Co., to obtain a footing in Kuwait appear to have other than purely legitimate commercial ends in view.

2. On receipt of your letter I again brought the matter to his notice, and he agreed that from the prices they seemed willing to pay a commercial profit appeared to be the last object. He informed me that he had given his Customs-master strict orders to treat the firm's representations with caution. This warning was certainly required as it was common report in the town that Messrs. Wonckhaus' most active assistant in Kuwait was the Shaikh's Customs-master.

3. As will appear from my diary for this week, the firm shipped 300 bags of sugar from Bushire by the Arab Steamer S.S. "Budrie". The consignment was "to order", and the Shaikh remarked upon it to me, in conversation, saying that he was waiting to see who would take delivery and would inform me later.

Enclosure 3.

No. 381, dated Kuwait, 17th August 1911.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, I.A., Political Agent, Kuwait,

To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

In continuation of my letter No. 355, dated the 2nd August 1911, I have the honour to report in connection with the efforts being made by Messrs. Wonckhaus & Co., to establish themselves at this port, that Shaikh Mubarak related to me the following conversation which he had with the firm's representative, Abdulla "Germani", since the latter's return to Kuwait.

2. The Shaikh said that he had informed Abdulla "Germani" that he objected to their wholesale purchases of grain in Kuwait for the reason that such purchases seriously disturbed the small local market and caused very considerable distress to the poorer population by the artificial inflation of prices. He could not see the firm's object in buying in Kuwait when they could equally easily purchase direct from the country where the grain was produced and at the same time save the extra Customs dues, landing fees, etc., which added to the price in Kuwait. If the firm wanted boats for shipments he had no objection to their utilizing Kuwait boats, as that procedure would bring in a return to his seafaring subjects without making it harder for poor people to buy their food. He had already heard grumbles from his people at the high prices which had resulted from the firm's purchases, and not wishing to hear more he wished the firm to buy their grain elsewhere, when they could employ Kuwait labour in the boats if they liked without causing loss to his people.

3. It remains to be seen what effect the Shaikh's objection has, but there can be little doubt that it meets with general approval locally. The Shaikh's own objection, together with his recent action in regard to his Customs' management, and the warbling (reported in my above-quoted letter) to his Customs-master will, it is to be hoped, have some retarding influence on the German firm's local ambitions.

4. With reference to paragraph 2 of my letter No. 355, dated 2nd August 1911, you will have seen from my diary for the week ending 9th August 1911 that delivery of the consignment of 300 bags of sugar shipped by S. S. "Budrie" has been refused by the consignee, and the sugar remains in the Customs warehouse.

page 14



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page 3

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107-28/6
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No. 227, dated Bushire, the 10th (received 20th) February 1912 (Confidential).

From—J. H. BILL, Esq., First Assistant Resident (in the absence of the Residency),

To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

In continuation of the correspondence ending with this office letter No. 2168 of August 24th, 1911, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, copies

No. 29, dated the 22nd January 1912, and of the communications marginally noted received from the Political Agent, Kuwait, No. C-4, dated the 1st February 1912.

regarding the efforts of Messrs. Wonckhaus & Co. to establish themselves in Kuwait.

No. 29, dated the 22nd January 1912.

From—The Head Clerk in charge in the absence of the Political Agent, Kuwait,
To—J. H. BILL, Esq., First Assistant Resident, Bushire.

I beg to forward herewith, for your information, a copy of an Arabic letter No. 8—426, dated 24th Muharram 1330 (= 14th January 1912) from Messrs. Robert Wonckhaus & Co., Basrah, to Shaikh Mubarak asking the latter's permission and help to open business in Kuwait. The Shaikh sent the letter to me in original on 20th instant through his confidential clerk asking to return it to him after perusal and with an intimation that he was not going to send any reply to it to Messrs. Robert Wonckhaus & Co.

2. Abdulla "Geamani," the Germans' Agent, who it appears was the bearer of the above letter, returned here from Basrah by mail steamer on the 19th with about a dozen new and fancy bentwood chairs and some other furniture. His servants stated to the people on the steamer that Shaikh Mubarak had now permitted them to open a proper business house in Kuwait and that the furniture was brought for the new office.

Translation of a letter No. 8—426, dated Basrah, the 24th Muharram 1330 = 15th January 1912, from MESSRS. ROBERT WONCKHAUS & Co. to SHAIKH MUBARAK-AS-SUBAH, Chief of Kuwait.

After presenting the necessary respects to Your Excellency and inquiring after your health, we beg to represent that having observed that benefit will be accrued by all the world owing to the rains, we intend opening commercial business on your side; and this business will consist of exporting food-stuff and importing such piece goods as may be produced to us and about which we may agree with the merchants of your side. We only request Your Excellency to direct your noble attention to us and to place no prohibition on our trade and no interdict on our shipments. We have appointed, as our Agent in your side, the bearer of this (letter) who is an Arab named Abdulla and we request Your Excellency that if any highhandedness emanated from or against him, you may try the parties in your esteemed Majlis and condemn the oppressor in such a manner as is in accordance with your view and opinion.

This is what was necessary to be stated to Your Excellency and should you have any work or service it will be performed immediately on your intimation and we are awaiting your news. May you always enjoy the protection of God the Most High and salaams.

No. C-4, dated the 1st February 1912.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, Political Agent, Kuwait,
To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

I have the honour to invite a reference to this office letter No. 29, dated the 22nd January 1912, regarding the efforts of Messrs. Wonckhaus to establish themselves in Kuwait.

126 F. D.—8 E—481-488—Apl.



17

2. On my return to Kuwait, Shaikh Mubarak referred to the firm's letter to him (copy of which was forwarded with the letter above quoted) and said that he had made no reply to this communication, which apparently reached Kuwait during the Shaikh's absence. He added that while he was at Failiyah he was visited by one of the European staff of the firm, presumably by Mr. Brown, who endeavoured to obtain permission to open a branch in Kuwait under the charge of a European, and to purchase or lease permanent premises. The Shaikh said that he refused to entertain the idea and finally when Mr. Brown pressed him for his reasons in discriminating between British and other merchants the Shaikh said that the cases were not analogous, his relations with Indian merchants were of long standing and that he did not wish himself saddled with the difficulties which were certain to arise if any of the German firm's creditors defaulted. He added that eventually he told Mr. Brown that if the German firm desired they could address the Political Agent in Kuwait and if that officer recommended their application he himself might possibly consider it.



Home

18 (16)

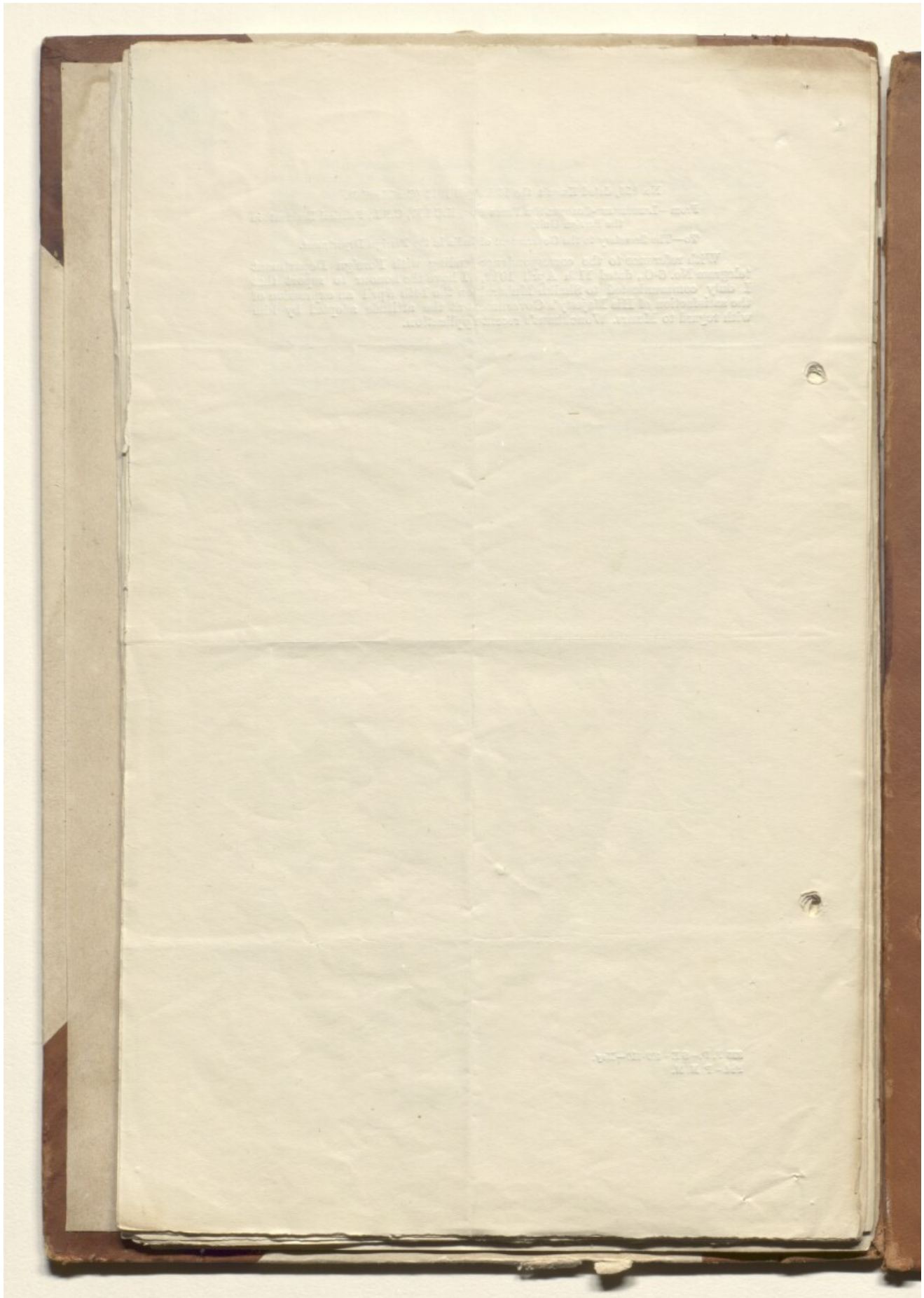
No. 856, dated Kuwait, the 16th April 1912 (Confidential).
From—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR PERCY COX, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Political Resident in
the Persian Gulf,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

With reference to the correspondence ending with Foreign Department telegram No. 6-C., dated 11th April 1912, I have the honour to report that I duly communicated to Shaikh Mubarak on the 14th April an expression of the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government at the attitude adopted by him with regard to Messrs. Wonckhaus's recent application.

File XXVII
3
page 44

325 F. D.—S E—409-410—May.
Erd.—P. M. M.





Kuwait

(17) 19

No. 1233, dated Bushire, the 22nd (received 29th) June 1912.

From—J. H. BILL, Esq., I.C.S., First Assistant Resident (in the absence of the Resident),

To—The HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR HENRY MCMAHON, G.C.V.O. K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla.

In continuation of this office letter No. 227, dated 10th February 1912, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of the communication marginally noted, received from the Political Agent, Kuwait, regarding the efforts of Messrs. Wonckhaus & Co. to establish themselves in Kuwait.

→ page 16

No. C-47, dated Kuwait, the 10th June 1912.

From—CAPTAIN W. H. I. SHAKESPEAR, I.A., Political Agent, Kuwait,

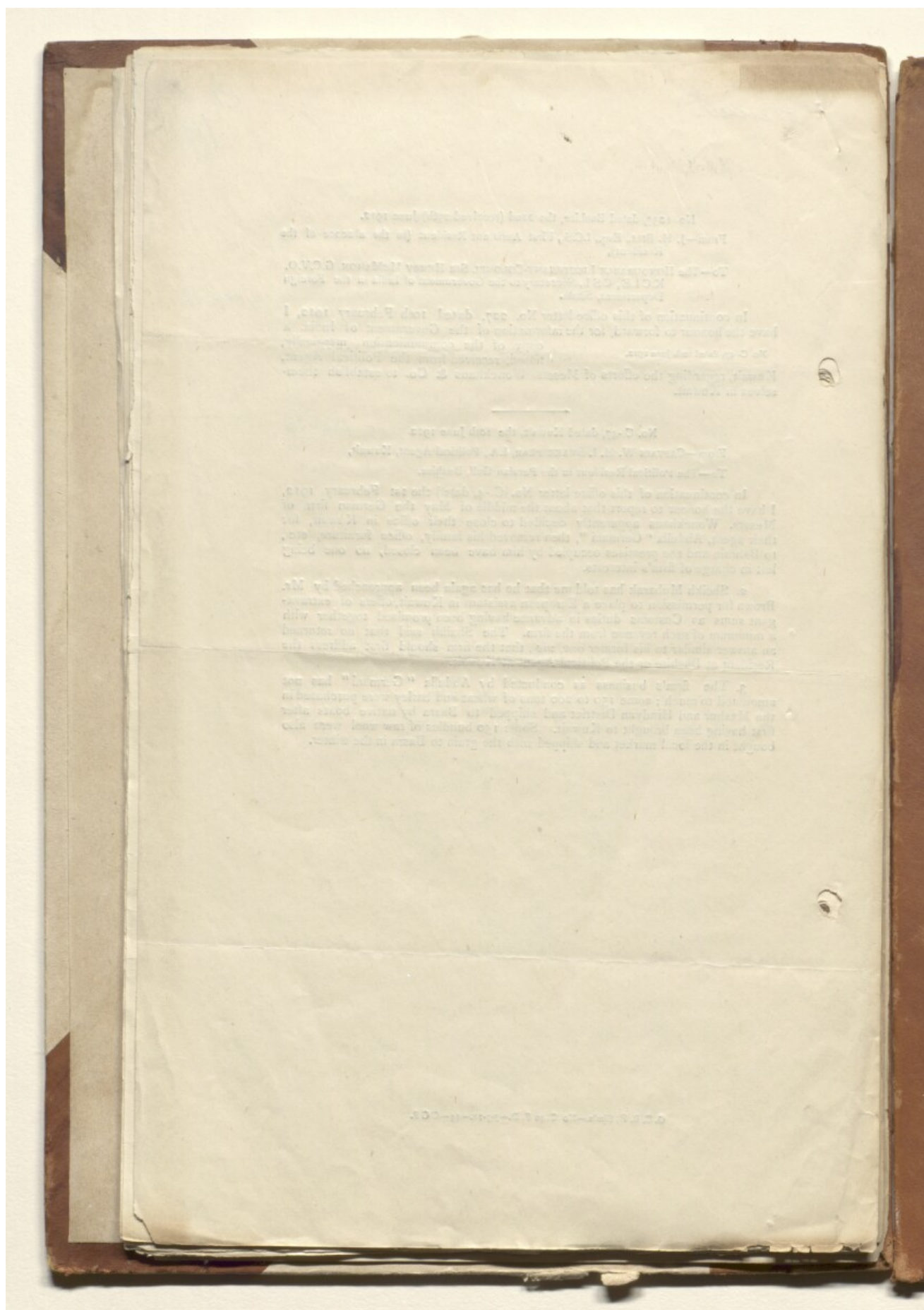
To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

page 16

In continuation of this office letter No. [C-4, dated the 1st February 1912, I have the honour to report that about the middle of May the German firm of Messrs. Wonckhaus apparently decided to close their office in Kuwait, for their agent, Abdulla "Germani", then removed his family, office furniture, etc., to Bahrain and the premises occupied by him have been closed, no one being left in charge of firm's interests.

2. Sheikh Mubarak has told me that he has again been approached by Mr. Brown for permission to place a European assistant in Kuwait, offers of extravagant sums as Customs duties in advance having been promised together with a minimum of such revenue from the firm. The Shaikh said that he returned an answer similar to his former one, *vis.*, that the firm should first address the Resident at Bushire or the Political Agent at Kuwait.

3. The firm's business as conducted by Abdulla "Germani" has not amounted to much; some 150 to 200 tons of wheat and barley were purchased in the Mashur and Hindyan District and shipped to Basra by native boats after first having been brought to Kuwait. Some 150 bundles of raw wool were also bought in the local market and shipped with the grain to Basra in the winter.





CONFIDENTIAL

No C.S-3 of 1912. (B) 28

Political Agency,

Kuwait .

3rd July 1912.

From,

Captain W. H. I. Shakespear, I. A.,

Political Agent, KUWAIT .

To,

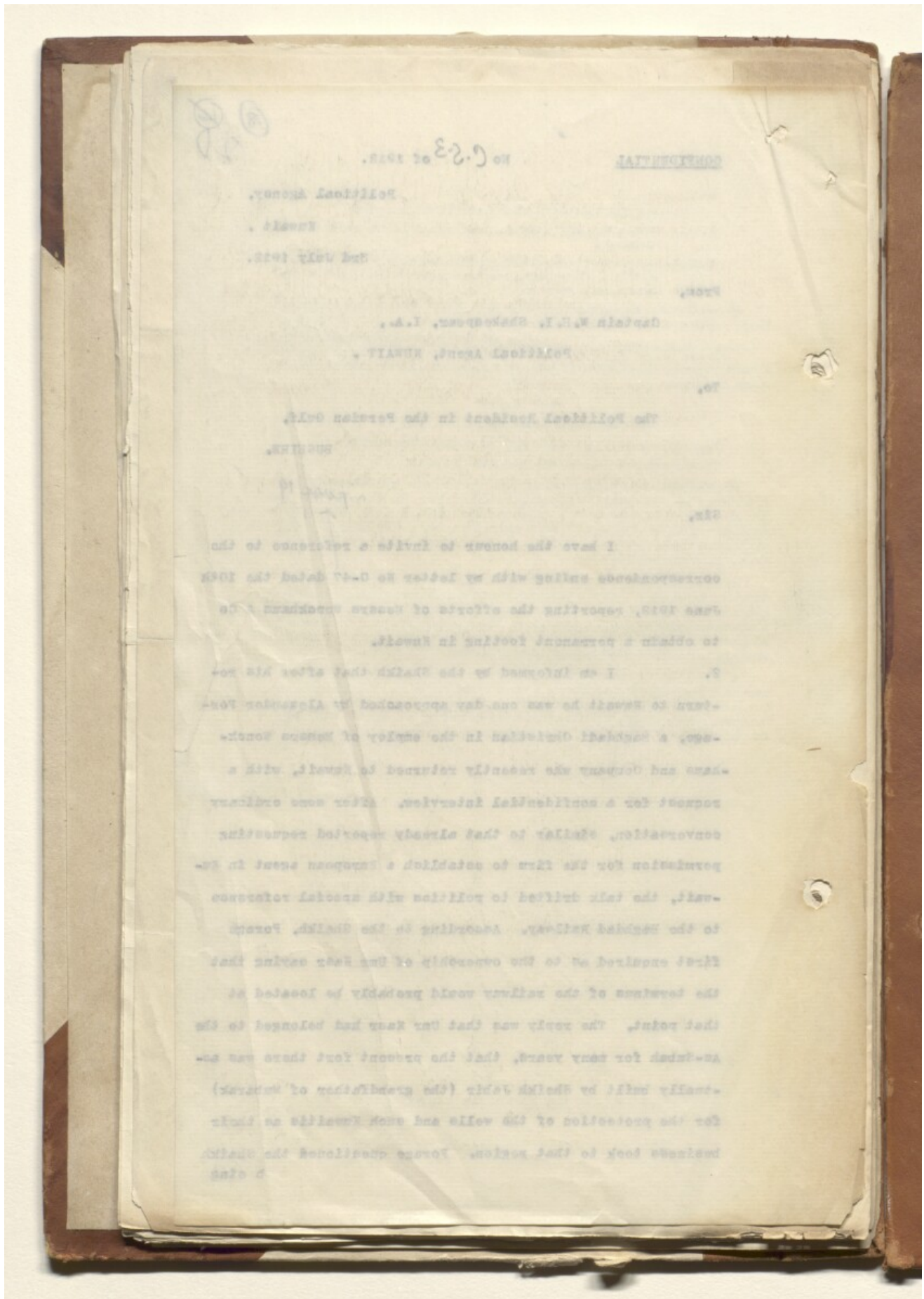
The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

BUSHIRE.

Sir, page 19

I have the honour to invite a reference to the correspondence ending with my letter No C-47 dated the 10th June 1912, reporting the efforts of Messrs Wonckhaus & Co to obtain a permanent footing in Kuwait.

2. I am informed by the Shaikh that after his return to Kuwait he was one day approached by Alexander Forage, a Baghdadi Christian in the employ of Messrs Wonckhaus and Company who recently returned to Kuwait, with a request for a confidential interview. After some ordinary conversation, similar to that already reported requesting permission for the firm to establish a European agent in Kuwait, the talk drifted to politics with special reference to the Baghdad Railway. According to the Shaikh, Forage first enquired as to the ownership of Umr Kasr saying that the terminus of the railway would probably be located at that point. The reply was that Umr Kasr had belonged to the As-Sabah for many years, that the present fort there was actually built by Sheikh Jabir (the grandfather of Mubarak) for the protection of the wells and such Kuwaitis as their business took to that region. Forage questioned the Shaikh being

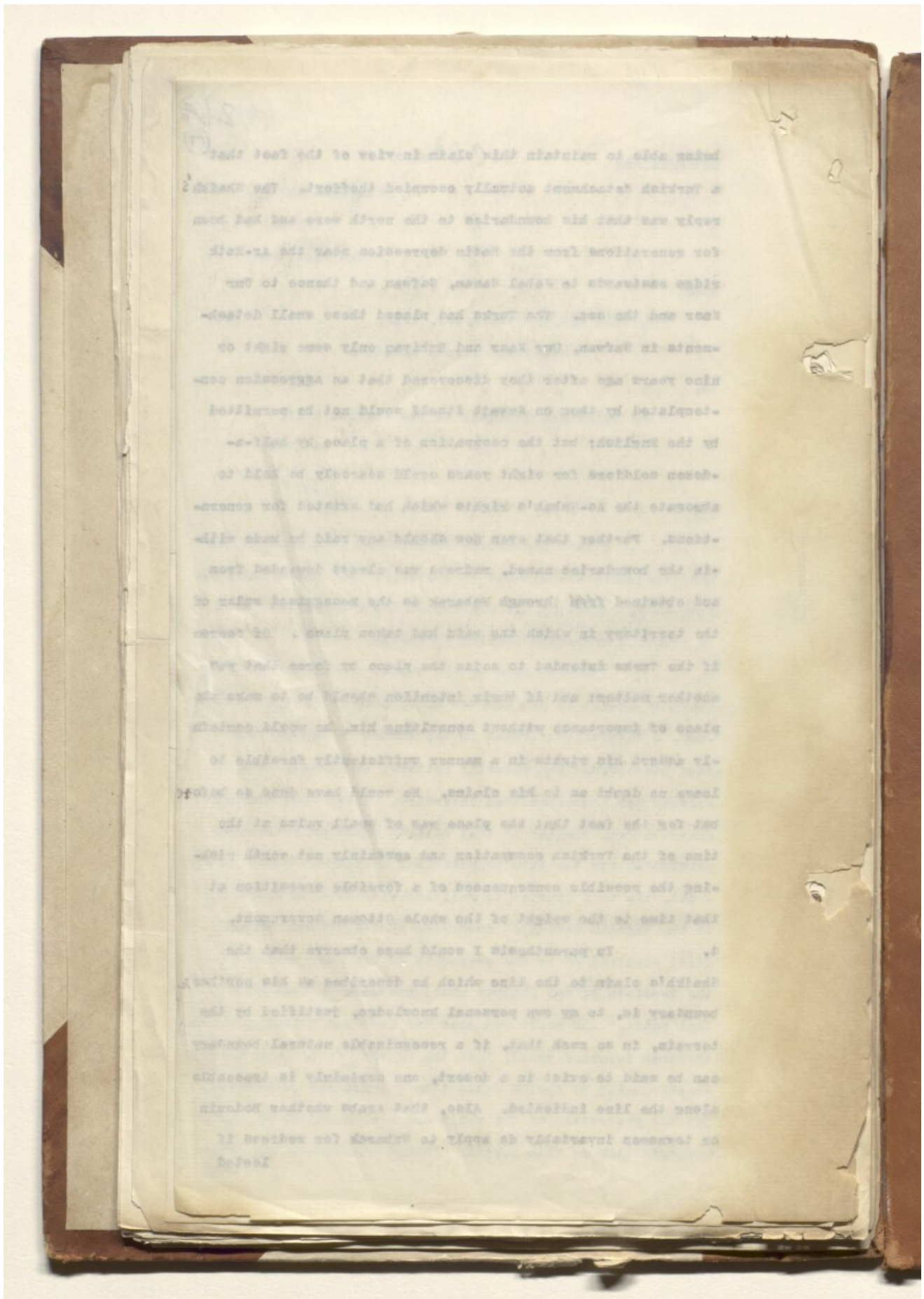
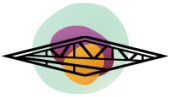




218
(19)

being able to maintain this claim in view of the fact that a Turkish detachment actually occupied the fort. The Shaikh's reply was that his boundaries to the north were and had been for generations from the Batin depression near the Ar-Ratk ridge eastwards to Jabal Sanam, Safwan and thence to Umr Kasr and the sea. The Turks had placed these small detachments in Safwan, Umr Kasr and Bubiyan only some eight or nine years ago after they discovered that an aggression contemplated by them on Kuwait itself would not be permitted by the English; but the occupation of a place by half-a-dozen soldiers for eight years could scarcely be held to abrogate the As-Sabah's rights which had existed for generations. Further that even now should any raid be made within the boundaries named, redress was always demanded from and obtained ~~from~~ through Mubarak as the recognised ruler of the territory in which the raid had taken place. Of course if the Turks intended to seize the place by force that was another matter; and if their intention should be to make the place of importance without consulting him, he would certainly assert his rights in a manner sufficiently forcible to leave no doubt as to his claims. He would have done so before but for the fact that the place was of small value at the time of the Turkish occupation and certainly not worth risking the possible consequences of a forcible opposition at that time to the weight of the whole Ottoman Government.

4. In parenthesis I would here observe that the Shaikh's claim to the line which he describes as his northern boundary is, to my own personal knowledge, justified by the terrain, in so much that, if a recognisable natural boundary can be said to exist in a desert, one certainly is traceable along the line indicated. Also, that Arabs whether Bedouin or townsmen invariably do apply to Mubarak for redress if looted





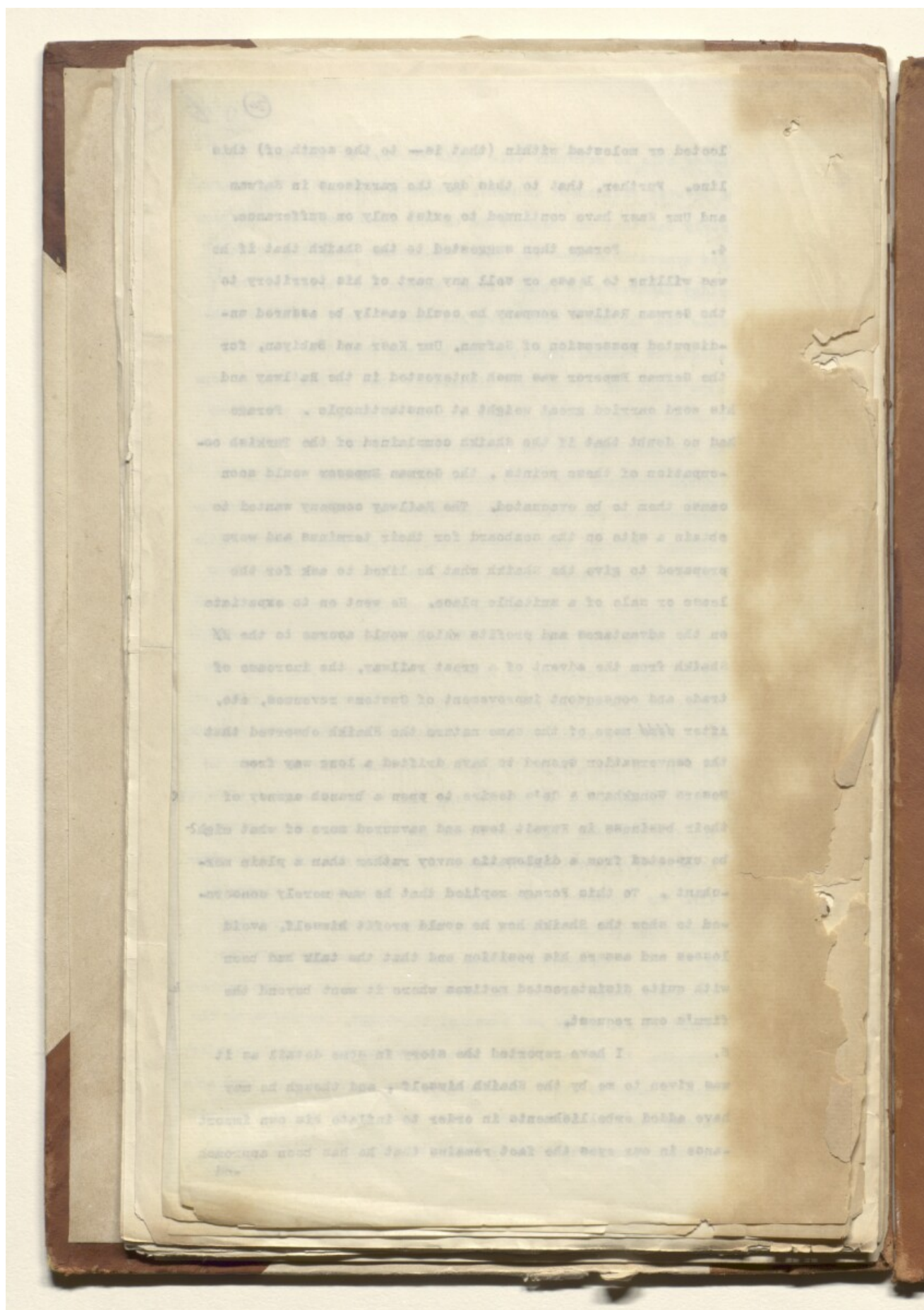
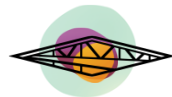
(20) 28

looted or molested within (that is— to the south of) this line. Further, that to this day the garrisons in Safwan and Umr Kasr have continued to exist only on sufferance.

4. Forage then suggested to the Shaikh that if he was willing to lease or sell any part of his territory to the German Railway company he could easily be assured undisputed possession of Safwan, Umr Kasr and Bubiyan, for the German Emperor was much interested in the Railway and his word carried great weight at Constantinople. Forage had no doubt that if the Shaikh complained of the Turkish occupation of these points, the German Emperor would soon cause them to be evacuated. The Railway company wanted to obtain a site on the seaboard for their terminus and were prepared to give the Shaikh what he liked to ask for the lease or sale of a suitable place. He went on to expatiate on the advantages and profits which would accrue to the Shaikh from the advent of a great railway, the increase of trade and consequent improvement of Customs revenues, etc. After ~~some~~ more of the same nature the Shaikh observed that the conversation seemed to have drifted a long way from Messrs Wengkhaus & Co's desire to open a branch agency of their business in Kuwait town and savoured more of what might be expected from a diplomatic envoy rather than a plain merchant. To this Forage replied that he was merely concerned to show the Shaikh how he could profit himself, avoid losses and assure his position and that the talk had been with quite disinterested motives where it went beyond the firm's own request.

5. I have reported the story in some detail as it was given to me by the Shaikh himself, and though he may have added embellishments in order to inflate his own importance in our eyes the fact remains that he has been approached

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(21) 238

-ed more or less openly in German interests at a time when negotiations are ostensibly in progress only between the British and Turkish Governments, and that an effort is being made to obtain a definite claim to some suitable or possible site for a railway terminus.

I would add that any news regarding the Baghdad Railway, allocation of its capital, discussion of possible sites for a terminus, etc is sought and discussed diligently and keenly by all the better educated in the town and by none with more acumen than the Shaikh.

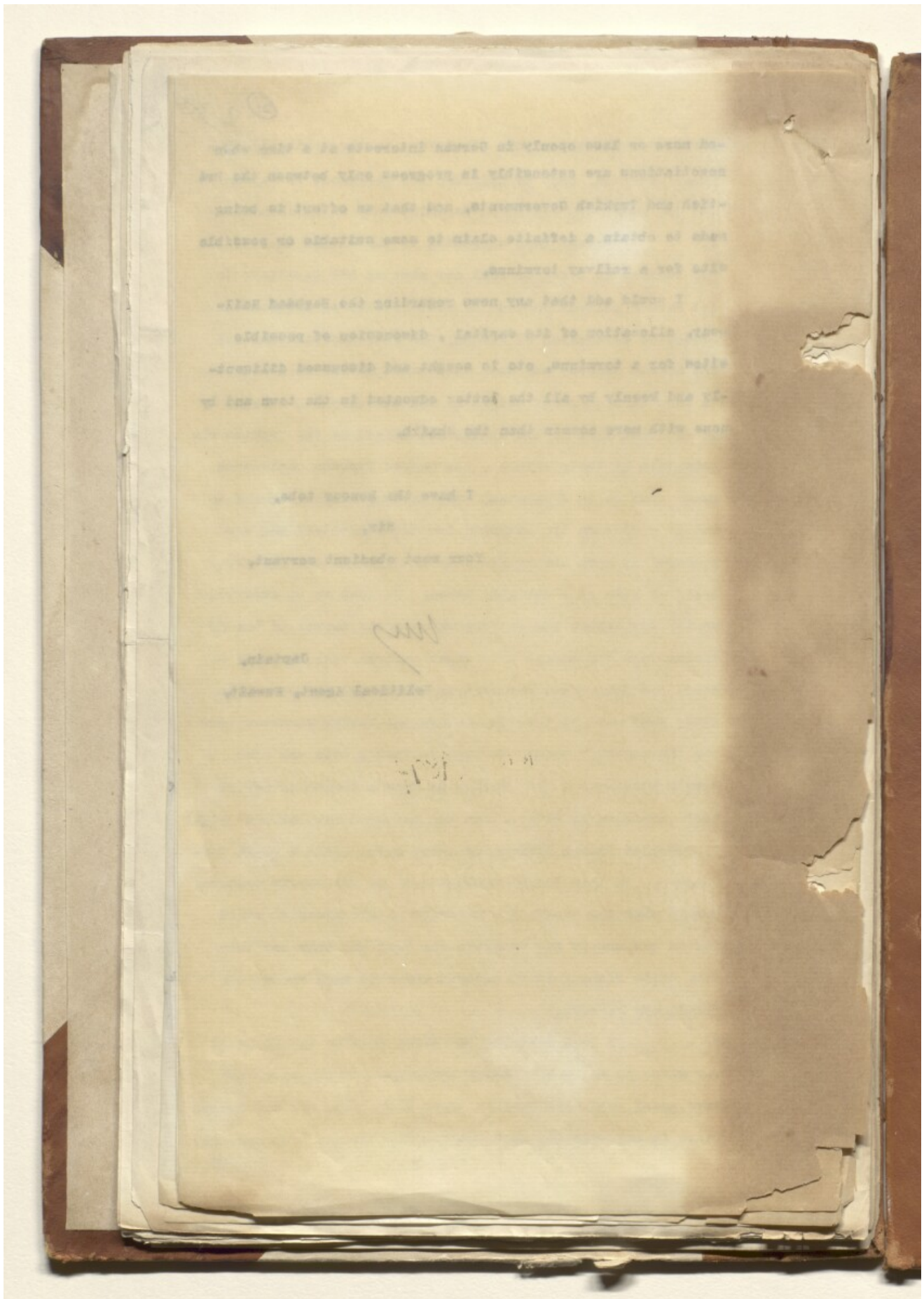
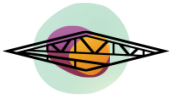
I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Captain,

Political Agent, Kuwait.





(22)

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